

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, RI

Why Japan Won World War II

“An Application of the Operational Factors of War”

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the *Joint Military Operations* department.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature:

Christopher Kennedy
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"In operations against America, we must take positive actions such as an invasion of Hawaii."

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto
Lecture to the Japanese Navy Torpedo School, 1928¹

Prologue - 7 December 1941

"The first bombs began falling on Pearl Harbor at 0755 on Sunday, December 7, 1941. The airfields and battleships were the principal targets of the first wave, with a second wave attacking other ships and shipyard facilities. The attackers met with great success, destroying or damaging all eight battleships, three light cruisers, three destroyers, and four smaller vessels, as well as destroying 75 percent of the aircraft at the airfields around Pearl Harbor.² Several ships did get underway during the attack, most notably the battleship USS Nevada (BB-36). It had almost reached the mouth of the harbor when the eighteen-inch shells of the battleship Yamato began falling around it. Hit five times by the Yamato and another four times by fourteen-inch shells from the Hiei, it beached itself at the mouth of the harbor and burned to the waterline. Other smaller ships also got underway and met similar fates at the hands of the Japanese battleship force that had appeared off the coast of Oahu.

All over the island, repair parties began to put out the fires and to repair ships and aircraft; however, their efforts were hampered by the arrival of the Japanese assault forces which began landing throughout the island at 1000. Although some activities acquitted themselves well in the ensuing fighting (most notably the Marine contingent at Ewa MCAS), the surprise was total. The island fell in under three days, with Japanese forces capturing intact the fuel farms and the shipyard, as well as the entire CINCPAC staff. Additionally, several ships were captured intact, including the USS Pennsylvania (BB-38, later renamed Tokyo) which was in dry dock. Although the Pacific Fleet carriers were at sea during the attack, two (the USS Lexington and the USS Enterprise) were returning from dropping off aircraft at Wake and Midway Islands. Neither had their full armaments, nor did they have the fuel to make it to California. Both were sunk after brief fights."

Congressional Inquiry Into the Pearl Harbor Debacle

Abstract

If Japan had followed its attack on Pearl Harbor with an invasion of Hawaii, it would have controlled the operational factors of war (time, space, and forces) and would therefore have won World War II. The lessons that can be learned from this hypothetical look back at history are applicable to today's Joint Force Commander in the execution of operations, whether they are MOOTW or conventional warfare.



The Attack Begins

The Operational Factors--Looking Back

"The original means of strategy is victory—that is, tactical success; its ends, in the final analysis, are those objects which will lead directly to peace. The application of these means for these ends will also be attended by factors that will influence it to a greater or lesser degree."

Clausewitz³

Although it was first authoritatively discussed in 1932, the invasion of Hawaii should have come as no surprise, as it had been contemplated in Japanese military circles ever since the U.S. incorporated Hawaii in 1898. In the book *Taiheiyo senryaku ron* [Discourse on Pacific Strategy], Chuko Ikezaki determined that an invasion of Hawaii was essential in a war with the U.S. for

political as well as military reasons, because it would politically force the United States to sue for peace by militarily threatening targets from Alaska to the Panama Canal.⁴ The head of the Japanese Navy, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, also saw the political and military utility of an invasion of Hawaii, because he instinctively understood that an invasion of Hawaii would give the Japanese control over the operational factors of war. Control of these factors--space, time, and forces--helps determine the outcome of operations and, ultimately, wars. By capturing Hawaii, the Japanese would have controlled the factors of space, time, and forces, and would therefore have won the war; embracing the concepts of *Joint Vision 2010* will enable us to control the operational factors of war and will ensure our success in future military endeavors, whether they are outright war or military operations other than war (MOOTW).

Space

"The main, the basic need is for ample space..."

Clausewitz⁵

Space is an important factor for conducting warfare at the operational level, as the amount of land, sea, and airspace available affects both the employment and employability of the forces under one's command. According to Vego, the higher the level of war, the more important is this factor.⁶ The more space that a commander has available to conduct movement and maneuver, the greater his freedom of action; less space equals fewer choices. The factor of space has many dimensions which can influence how a war is fought, of which the most important are the physical characteristics of the battle space, the distances involved, and geostrategic positioning. The capture of Hawaii would

have given the Japanese control over all of these dimensions.

As shown below in Chart 1, the war in the Pacific covered a huge area; therefore, the physical characteristics of the region would play an extremely important part in how the war was fought there. The most influential of the physical characteristics of the Pacific were those of size, topography, populations, and natural resources.

As far as size goes, there isn't a larger place to have a war than in the Pacific, whose large amounts of open space would have allowed both belligerents to fully utilize the mobility and

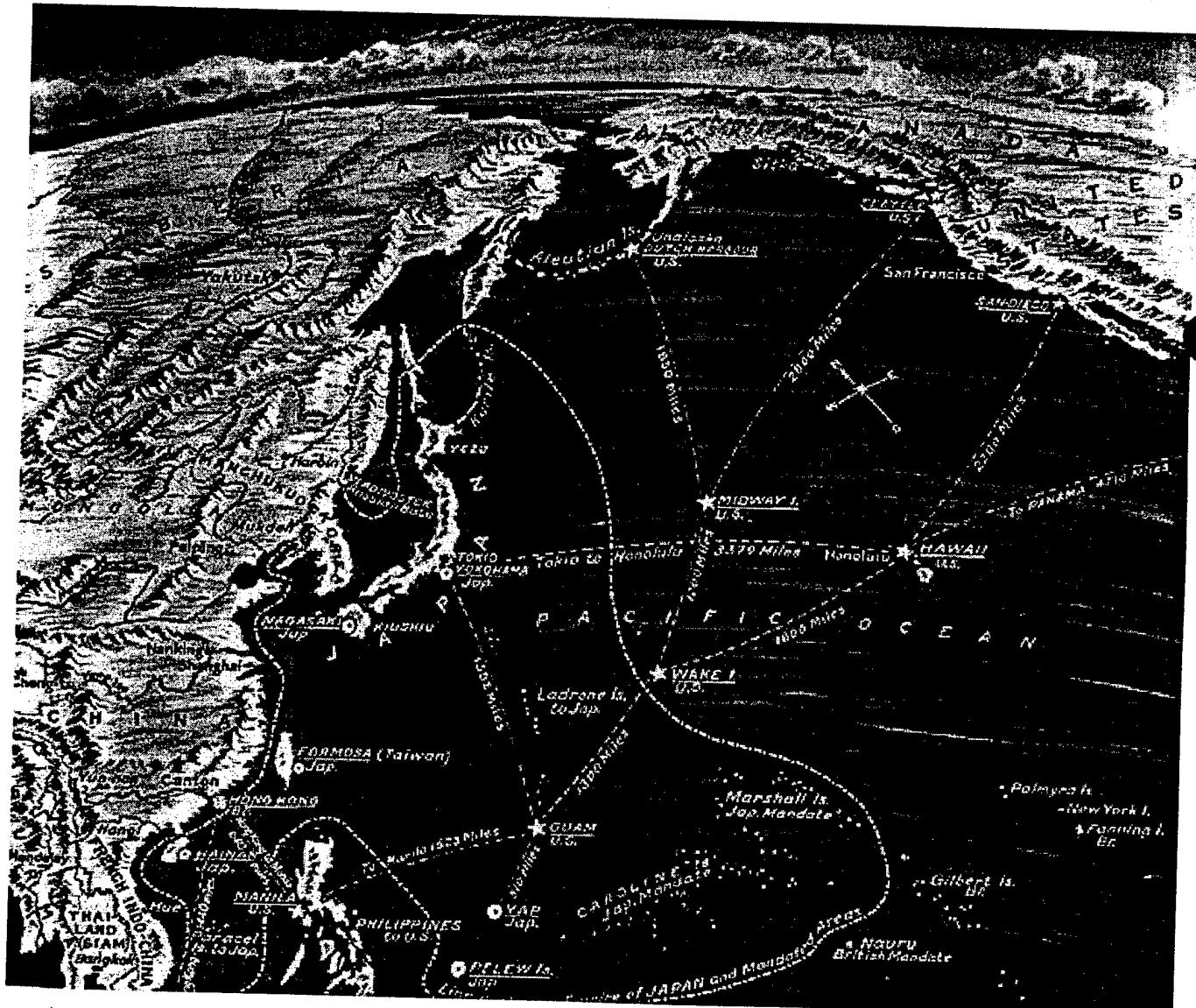


Chart 1. The Theater of Operations

combat power of their forces. The Japanese, however, would have been at a definite advantage with the capture of Hawaii. Because of the vast amounts of space and the geostrategic positioning involved (discussed later), after a successful invasion the United States would have only been able to attack Japan in one place, Hawaii, while it would have been forced to defend an area stretching from the outermost Alaskan islands all the way to the Panama Canal. As this area is over 9,000 miles in length, there is no way that the depleted U.S. forces could have defended it adequately. The Pacific's size, therefore, would have definitely favored the Japanese after a successful invasion, an invasion which would have been made possible by Hawaii's topography and population.

The beaches on the south of the island would have provided good landing areas for the Japanese, and were within easy striking distance of Ewa MCAS, Hickam Airfield, and Pearl Harbor itself. In fact, the Japanese probably could have advanced so quickly that they would have been able to capture CINCPAC headquarters while the staff was still trying to figure out what to do next. Additionally, any of the staff that escaped would probably have been rounded up quickly due to Hawaii's indigenous population. Of the islands' 400,000 residents, 160,000 (almost 40%) were first or second generation Japanese;⁷ most of which would probably have gone over to the Japanese side after a successful Japanese invasion. Furthermore, the Japanese were just one of many ethnic groups on the island, a fact which would have complicated American decision-making on what to do next. Any attempt to reconquer the Hawaiian archipelago in general, and Oahu in specific, that included massive bombing of the population would not only have alienated white Americans who had relatives there, but also might have caused an uprising among the 120,000 Japanese-Americans living on the West Coast. Decision-makers may have been at a loss for what to do next.

Resources, the final element of the region's physical characteristics, weren't a major factor

because of what was on the Hawaiian islands; in reality, the entire war was over the oil and other resources in Southeast Asia, over 5,000 miles away. These resources were critical not only to Japan's war effort, but to the continued survival of the Japanese economy at large, as Japan had to import most of the resources it needed to survive. For example, Japan imported over ninety percent of the oil it consumed, as well as one fifth of its food. Seventy percent of the zinc and tin that Japan consumed came from overseas, as well as ninety percent of the lead and all of the raw cotton and wool, aluminum, and rubber. Furthermore, steel production in Japan depended on imported iron ore and coking coal, and its aircraft production on imported bauxite. The conquest of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies would have made Japan self-sufficient and would have given it three-quarters of the world's natural rubber production, two-thirds of its tin, and, more importantly, enough oil to fill all of its needs.⁸ The only thing that stopped the Japanese from acquiring these resources was the American fleet at Pearl Harbor; however, they had to have these resources to survive. When the U.S. and Britain placed an embargo on sending oil and steel to Japan in July of 1940, the Japanese, with less than a two-year's supply, were forced to make a choice--perish slowly under the embargo or attack while they still had the means. They chose the latter.

The next dimension of space, distance, would have greatly aided Japan in a couple of ways after a successful invasion. First, as Hawaii was almost 2,300 miles away from America's next closest base in San Diego, it would have been extremely difficult to mount an operation to recover it. With Japan controlling Hawaii, the American assault force would have had to penetrate Japan's defense in depth: Japanese submarines patrolling from Pearl Harbor off the coast of the U.S., the Japanese fleet deploying from Hawaii (which would probably have included at least eight of their aircraft carriers, supported by many battleships, cruisers, and destroyers), land-based bombers

operating out of Hickam and Wheeler Air Bases, and then the coastal defenses of the island itself.

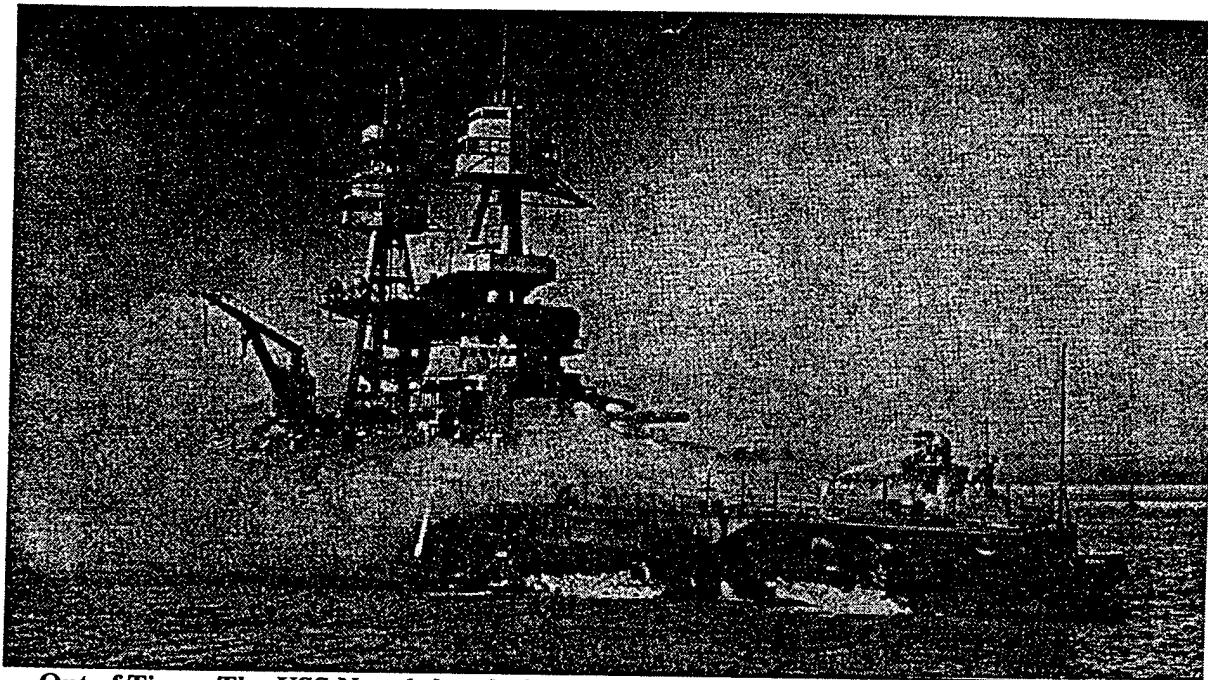
Had America ever decided to try to reclaim Hawaii, it would have paid dearly, and even then probably wouldn't have been successful.

Second, distance would also have caused the loss of the rest of America's possessions and allies in the Pacific. Cut off from American support and replenishment, the garrisons on Wake Island, Guam, Midway, and the Philippines would have all been forced to surrender. The Australian forces, badly outnumbered at the Battle of Coral Sea, never would have had a chance and would have been defeated, and Australia made to sign a separate peace in order to keep the Japanese from invading. In less than a year, the Japanese would have controlled the Pacific in its entirety.

The invasion of Hawaii would also have given the Japanese the advantage of geostrategic positioning, the next dimension of space. The Pacific Ocean's lines of operation and supply can be looked at as an hour glass lying on its side, with Hawaii in the narrow center and the United States' west coast and Asia on the ends. Hawaii is, in effect, an unsinkable aircraft carrier anchored in the middle of the Pacific, and is the only stepping stone between the U.S. and Micronesia. Hawaii, therefore, is the key to the Pacific war and whoever holds it has the advantages of being in the interior position. There are many ramifications of this position. As the defender, Japan would have only had to defend one area, Hawaii, while the U.S. would have been forced to defend its entire west coast (from Alaska to the Panama Canal). According to Joint Pub 3-0, successful operations on exterior lines require a stronger and more mobile force;⁹ however, the U.S. wouldn't have had one, as its fleet would have been in shambles. Had the U.S. tried to bypass Hawaii, such as by trying to capture Midway Island as a forward base, their lines of supply would have been extremely exposed and in tremendous peril, and Midway would probably have fallen (again). The question is

moot, though, as the U.S. wouldn't have had the forces to attempt it, anyway. Ultimately, the U.S. would have had to recapture Hawaii to have a chance at winning the war; however, the force that it sent to do so would probably have been defeated in detail before it ever had a chance to land. Additionally, only having to defend in one area would have freed up forces for Japan to use in the capture of the rest of the Pacific islands and China. Finally, as the Japanese had multiple lines of supply and communications into Hawaii, it would have been difficult for the U.S. to target them effectively with their few remaining submarines.

With the majority of the Pacific islands, Manchuria, China, and Southeast Asia under their control, Japan would have successfully completed all of its war aims. It would, however, have also reached its culminating point, as any additional advances would have overextended its ability to keep what it already had. Like a turtle, its defenses at this point would have presented a hard shell to the world; however, like the turtle, its defenses were soft underneath if the outer shell should be breached. The risks of continuing to advance would have simply not been worth the potential gains, as their war aims would already have been satisfied. To the west lay the second most populous nation in the world, India, who by January, 1942 already had an army of 1,565,000.¹⁰ Even though the Indian Army was poorly trained and equipped, to have continued the attack into India would have invited being overwhelmed by sheer numbers. To the north, Russia would have been doing poorly against Germany without the aid of the U.S., and the Japanese might have been tempted to right some of the historical wrongs that they felt had been inflicted on them by the Russians; however, they simply didn't have the forces necessary to engage a new enemy while they were still consolidating the areas that they had already captured. The Japanese already had as much space as they were able to control; therefore, stated, they would have been ready to negotiate for peace.



Out of Time: The USS Nevada beached and on fire after its attempted run for the sea

Time

"The concepts of simultaneity and depth are foundations of deep operations theory. The intent is to bring force to bear on the opponent's entire structure in a near simultaneous manner that is within the decision making cycle of the opponent. The goal is to overwhelm and cripple enemy capabilities and enemy will to resist...Simultaneity in joint force operations contributes directly to an enemy's collapse..."

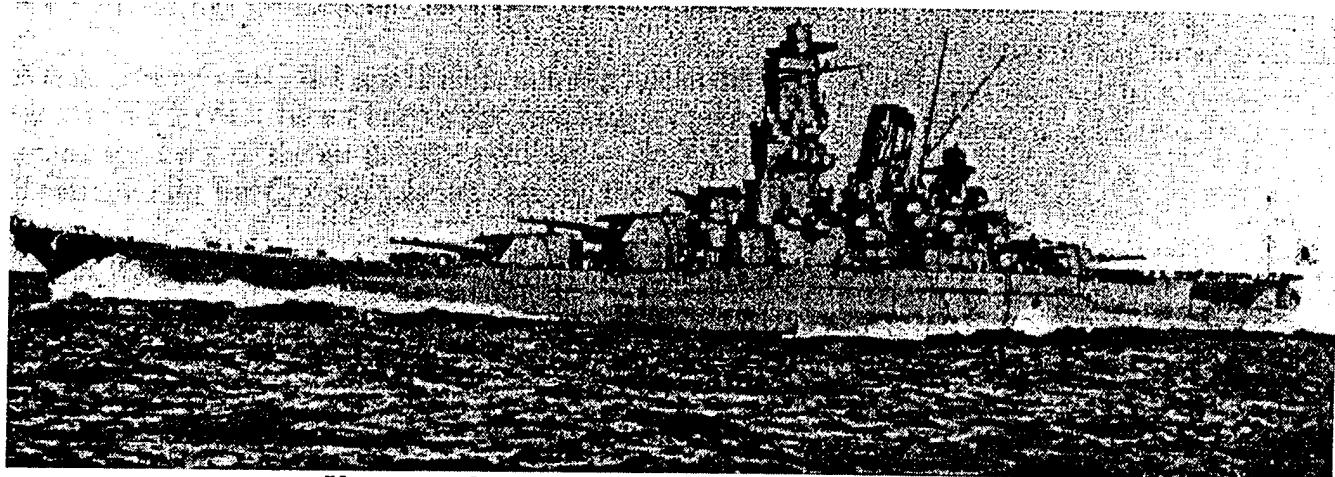
Joint Pub 3-0¹¹

The Japanese would have also controlled the second operational factor, time, with an invasion of Hawaii. The factor of time has many different aspects, such as timing, decision cycles, and warning and reaction times; however, with complete surprise and initiative on the side of the Japanese from the start, the Americans would never have had the most important time--time to catch up. The timing of the Japanese attack was perfect, as they caught the U.S. completely by surprise and timed their strikes to perfection. Had they followed the strikes up with an invasion, they would

have had time on their side, and with time they would have controlled the initiative. They would have been able to advance in any direction they chose.

It would have been different for the Americans. They would have lost Hawaii, as there wouldn't have been time to reinforce it. While today's military might have been able to reinforce the island by air in time to save it (though probably not), the military of 1941 wouldn't have had a chance. The extreme distances would have precluded reinforcement of Hawaii, much less any of the further outposts, in anything less than time measured in weeks or, more likely, months. Precious time would have been lost simply setting up a new staff to oversee the war in the Pacific, which most people would probably have believed to already have been lost, anyway. Additionally, the U.S. wouldn't have had the time necessary to get its industrial might into action. With the Japanese Navy freely roaming the coast, it wouldn't have taken long before the American citizenry was clamoring for peace. Sixteen-inch and eighteen-inch shells raining down on west coast cities would have seen to that. While the U.S. would probably have been able to outproduce Japan in the long run, even with Japanese control of the resources of Southeast Asia, and would have ultimately gained the advantage, the U.S. wouldn't have had the time necessary to mobilize its industry. The government would have been forced to sue for peace long before then.

History shows that time didn't fail the U.S. military, the military failed time. They had the warning time necessary to mount a defense, as radar had picked up the incoming strike force almost an hour out. This warning was ignored, though, and time (and the Japanese military) marched onward. The factor of time is unlike that of space or forces, in that once it is lost, you are unable to regain or reconstitute it. The U.S. would have lost the ability to control time or its destiny when it lost Hawaii, and would never have been able to get it back.



Yamato undergoes her shakedown cruise to Hawaii

Forces

"Superiority of numbers admittedly is the most important factor in the outcome of an engagement, so long as it is great enough to counterbalance all other contributing circumstances."

Clausewitz¹²

With the capture of Hawaii and the destruction of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, the Japanese would have controlled the factor of forces, both tangible and intangible. Tangible forces are those that are easily quantifiable, such as ships, men, or aircraft. Prior to the war, the United States had a numerical advantage in tangible forces due to the terms of the Washington and London Naval Treaties, as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Combatant Forces on 7 December, 1941¹³

	Aircraft Carriers	Battleships	Cruisers	Destroyers	Submarines
Japan	10	10	36	113	63
USA	8	17	36	171	112

However, as U.S. forces were divided almost equally between coasts, this meant that, in reality, the Japanese fleet was almost equivalent to the United States in in-theater forces, and had a definite advantage in aircraft carriers. After the capture of Hawaii and the destruction/capture of the Pacific Fleet, the Japanese would have greatly outnumbered the United States in the Pacific region, as can be seen in Table 2. Additionally, although some ships' commanding officers might have been able to scuttle/destroy their ships, many would have been captured intact and possibly incorporated (with more or less success) into the Japanese Navy. These figures do not include any potential gains by the Japanese Navy.

Table 2. Combatant Forces in Pacific on 11 December, 1941¹⁴

	Aircraft Carriers	Battleships	Cruisers	Destroyers	Submarines
Japan	10	10	34	111	63
USA	1	1*	7	30	11

*In overhaul, Bremerton, Washington

The decisive combat advantage that the Japanese Navy would have enjoyed if it massed its forces against the U.S. is readily apparent. While some might argue that the element of space would have been detrimental to the Japanese at this point because they would have had to defend such a vast area, this wouldn't have been the case as there wouldn't have been any other fleet around to oppose them. They weren't at war with Russia (who only had a small fleet and more pressing problems at that moment, anyway), and they had already defeated the Australians (who only had a couple of cruisers to start with). As the Japanese only had the U.S. left to oppose them, they could indeed have massed the majority of their naval forces around Hawaii, as that was the only place that

the U.S. could reach. While the U.S. could have brought its Atlantic Fleet to the west coast (and certainly would have since the west coast was being threatened), the fleet would have had to go through the Panama Canal (where they would have been very exposed to attack) or to go the long way around South America (a journey of 20,000 miles). As the Russians found out at the Battle of Tsushima Straits, it's generally not a good idea to make an extremely long journey which ends in a fleet engagement with the Japanese. As the Atlantic Fleet was outnumbered by the Japanese Navy in any event, both of these options would have set up the U.S. to lose its Atlantic Fleet as well.

The area where the Japanese Navy would truly have excelled, though, was in the area of intangible forces, such as morale, leadership, public support, and will to fight, because the loss of Hawaii and the Pacific Fleet would have been such a tremendous psychological blow to both the U.S. Navy and the U.S. population as a whole, and there would have probably been very little will to fight left in the United States. The population would have been completely shocked and demoralized, as would the U.S. Navy with the decapitation of the Pacific Fleet, and morale would have been extremely low.

With little will to fight left, and even less of a means to do it with, the U.S. would have been ready to capitulate in short order. If there had been even a few symbolic victories (like the Doolittle bombing of Tokyo), it might have been possible to revive morale; however, with the loss of Hawaii, even that wouldn't have been possible. I don't think that it would have seemed worthwhile to continue fighting over a territory that wasn't even a state yet, especially when American cities were under the constant threat of attack. While the Japanese had no desire to invade the U.S., they would have had no qualms about making life miserable for U.S. city dwellers and appearing intermittently to shell and bomb cities throughout the west coast, including the periodic bombardment of the naval

base at San Diego to ensure that the U.S. didn't develop a fleet to come out and meet them. With no other choices left, the U.S. would probably have chosen to sue for peace, hoping that they could then turn their attention back to the war in Europe in time to save Britain.

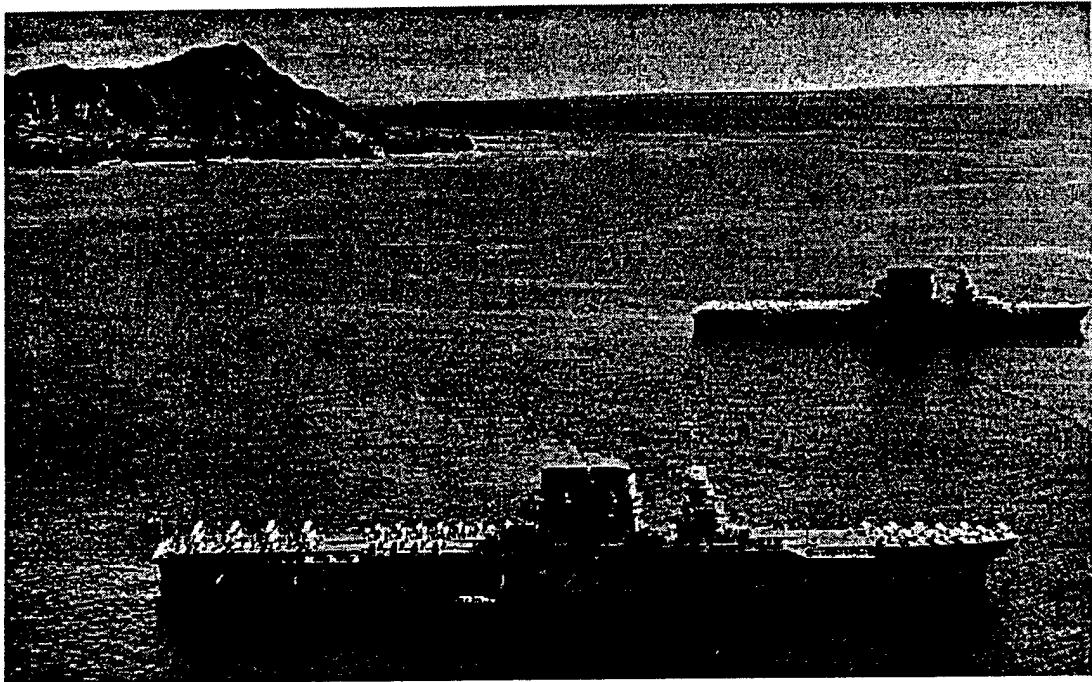
As low as morale would have been in the U.S. with the losses of Hawaii and its fleet, it would have been even higher in Japan. Japanese civilian and military leaders would have been revered by both the military and the general population for orchestrating such a tremendous victory, which would have led to near total popular support and a tremendous will to fight. The Japanese military would have felt and been unbeatable.

The Operational Factors--Why Control is Important

"Thus, those skilled in war subdue the enemy's army without battle. They capture his cities without assaulting them and overthrow his state without protracted operations."

Sun Tzu¹⁵

While the prologue account of the events of 7 December 1941 is fiction in recounting what happened after 1000, it might have actually turned out that way. In fact, most of the Japanese Navy's prewar planning included an invasion of Hawaii, to the extent that it was even wargamed in 1938 (where it succeeded). Even a U.S. Naval War College study in 1936 (entitled "Strategy and Tactics in Operations Against the United States") suggested that in a war against the U.S., Japan should open hostilities with a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.¹⁶ Were it not for the fact that the



USS Lexington (CV-2) and USS Enterprise (CV-6) depart Pearl Harbor to deliver aircraft to Midway and Wake Islands. They don't return.

Japanese Army opposed the invasion (wanting to use the troops elsewhere) and had a greater say in apportioning assets, the invasion probably would have occurred. This leads to two questions. Would it have been as successful as outlined above? If so, would it have enabled the Japanese to win the war?

In answer to the first, it probably would have been successful had it occurred. As history points out in twenty-twenty hindsight, the U.S. was completely unprepared to fight. Not only were its ships and planes lined up in neat rows to make targeting easier, and the island's defenses not set up (wartime gun emplacements were to be on what was private property, so the guns were still in boxes), more importantly, the U.S. was mentally unprepared to fight. They had warning of the incoming strikes almost an hour in advance, but weren't able to make the mental leap necessary to call it an attack. At 0645, over an hour prior to the attack, the destroyer *USS Ward* sank a minisub that was trying to enter the harbor, but no general alarm was raised.¹⁷ The fact of the matter is that

the U.S. was so mentally unprepared for war that, even though Admiral Knox said on 4 December that "no matter what happens, the U.S. Navy is not going to be caught napping,"¹⁸ they were unable to believe that an attack was actually happening until after the first bombs had fallen. If an invasion had followed the initial strikes, it would probably have been successful.

Would this have allowed them to win the war as discussed above? Unfortunately for us, the Japanese probably would have been successful, as they would have controlled all of the operational factors of war. Our success in the Pacific in World War II was due mainly to the fact that the Japanese bungled the attack on Pearl Harbor. While this may sound hard to believe, it's true. They didn't hit any of the fuel storage facilities at Pearl Harbor (containing millions of gallons of gas), nor did they hit any of the repair facilities, and they missed all of our carriers. These mistakes returned control of the factors of time, space, and forces to the United States.

Without the fuel farms, the Pacific Fleet would have had to go back to operating out of its west coast bases. Additionally, had the Japanese destroyed the Navy Yard, they would have done more damage to the fleet than they did by wrecking individual ships, and the fleet would probably have had no choice but to return to the west coast.¹⁹ The Japanese could have forced our fleet to operate from bases thousands of miles away and could have seized the key strategic base that controlled our access to the South Pacific, but they did not. These two mistakes caused the Japanese to relinquish control over the factor of space, giving it back to the United States. Ultimately, the U.S. was able to use its control over space to attack on multiple axes in the Pacific campaign. Because it controlled space, the U.S. was able to mass its forces, while Japan was forced to spread out its forces to defend on many fronts.

By foregoing an invasion the Japanese also conceded the factors of time and forces. Not

sinking the carriers would return to haunt them again and again, as aircraft from the *USS Enterprise* were responsible for sinking much of the Japanese Navy, including several of their carriers at the turning point Battle of Midway. Retaining Pearl Harbor also gave the U.S. control of the vessels that were sunk/damaged in the attack. Most of these were rebuilt quickly (at the undamaged repair facilities), allowing the U.S. to reconstitute its **fleet** in no time. This fleet also cut down the time that Japan had to consolidate its gains and gave the U.S. time to mobilize its massive industrial might (as Yamamoto had feared that it would).

The U.S. also gained intangible forces by keeping Hawaii. Without Hawaii, Doolittle would never have made his morale raid on Tokyo, and Port Moresby would have fallen to the Japanese at the Battle of Coral Sea. It's impossible to determine the effect that the loss of the Pacific Fleet and the CINCPAC staff would have had, not only on morale but on the ability to plan and carry out operations against the Japanese, but it would probably have been substantial. I think it's safe to say that the loss of Hawaii would probably have doomed us to defeat in the Pacific, and, as we would have been forced to transfer much of the Atlantic fleet for the defense of the west coast, possibly in Europe as well. More important than "what if-ing" history, though, is the lesson that can be learned from this case--the importance of taking control of the operational factors of war early on and never relinquishing them. While the U.S. will probably not be embroiled in a major global war anytime in the near future, some concepts and ideas are applicable across the spectrum of war and should be incorporated into our operational planning.

The Operational Factors--Looking Forward

Controlling the operational factors at the start of a conflict is likely to be difficult, as the Joint Force Commander (JFC) is likely to start out at a disadvantage in at least one of these areas. With force reductions decreasing our presence overseas, it is possible (some even might say probable) that the JFC will not have the right type of forces immediately at hand, or enough of the ones that he does have. Even if the commander has the requisite forces available for a conflict prior to it breaking out (whether that conflict is war or MOOTW), he will probably be at a disadvantage in time. This is due to the fact that the U.S. doesn't have enough intelligence assets to go around; therefore, crises will continue to sneak up on us, such as the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. When these events occur, as they sometimes will, we probably won't have the right forces in the crisis area and will be forced to waste time while they cover the intervening space to get to where they can influence the situation. The greater the distance, the more a premium will be placed on time (not every adversary will give us six months to build up our forces to the level that we'd like prior to opening hostilities). Therefore, in order to successfully resolve the crisis, it will be extremely important that the JFC apply the concepts of *Joint Vision 2010* to take control of the operational factors of war where able, as a starting point for regaining control over all of them. If the forces at hand are able to at least initially acquire some space, then the JFC will be able to trade it for the time necessary to bring additional forces into theater, in the same way that holding the Pusan perimeter in the Korean War gave us the time and ability to make the Inchon invasion.

How does the JFC do this with today's forces? By using the forces he's likely to have available, the Marine Amphibious Ready Group (MARG) and the carrier battle group (CVBG). Marines from the MARG can be used to seize decisive points like Hawaii was in the Pacific

(although not on that scale), as well as lodgment points like ports and airfields. These points give us the freedom of action to conduct the operational maneuver necessary to generate and sustain the momentum of our attack and to obtain the initiative.²⁰ By using LCAC's and V-22's (when available), the Marines will be able to capitalize on their "dominant maneuver" to seize these decisive points. Additional support for capturing these objectives will be provided by aircraft from the CVBG, employing weapons that make up in accuracy what they necessarily lack in numbers ("precision engagement"). If necessary, the 82nd Airborne (our only forced-entry division that is air mobile) can be used to supplement/reinforce the Marines as well. Better intelligence than the enemy, combined with operations that exploit our agility, versatility, depth, and synchronization will help our forces to react faster than the enemy and get inside his decision "OODA" loop (observe, orient, decide, act), thereby allowing us to seize the initiative. Once these lodgments are captured, Aegis cruisers and destroyers operating offshore can help defend them by providing anti-air and theater ballistic missile defense ("full dimensional protection").

With control of a port and an airfield, the JFC is able to bring in Maritime and Afloat Prepositioning assets and to marry them up with their troops. As shown in Desert Storm, prepositioned ships can be in theater and married up with Marines in only a week or two's time. By controlling an airfield, we are also able to bring in air assets to supplement the CVBG. Thus, by controlling some space (decisive points), we are able to acquire the time necessary to bring the additional forces into theater that are required to transition from the defensive to the offensive. Once they are in-theater, it will also be necessary to sustain them. Improved ("focused") logistics is going to be the key in getting not only the forces necessary to do the job on the scene, but also the supplies necessary to sustain their efforts.

Finally, it's imperative that the things that we can control (intangibles) are at least on our side. No matter how overwhelming our force, if it doesn't have popular support, it probably won't be successful (Vietnam). Morale, leadership, and will to fight are other intangibles that aren't only nice to have, in an era of smaller forces we've got to have them. The National Command Authority did an excellent job in getting both Congressional and public support for the military in Desert Storm. It must continue to do so in all future operations.

Ultimately, though, it is up to the JFC to use the forces that he's given to take control of the operational factors of war as soon as he can. As these forces are liable to be limited, at least initially, it is imperative that he make the most of the time and space that he has; if necessary trading space for the time required to complete the lodgment phase of the operation and build up the forces needed to complete the mission. It is only by controlling the operational factors of war that we are able to get and keep the initiative in a conflict. As initiative is the key to both movement and mobility, controlling the operational factors of war gives you choices on how to best employ your forces, rather than letting the enemy dictate strategy to you. Without controlling the operational factors of war there can be no initiative; without initiative there are no choices; without choices there can be no success; therefore, in order to be successful, we must gain and keep control of the operational factors of war from the earliest possible moment. After the attack on Pearl Harbor was complete, Yamamoto recognized the error of not following it up with an invasion, as an invasion would have given him control of the war in the Pacific. We must position ourselves in the future to ensure that we never experience the same regret.

If I am told to fight regardless of the consequences [of not invading Hawaii], I shall run wild for the first six months or a year, but I have utterly no confidence for the second or third years."

Yamamoto²¹
September, 1940

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